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ABSTRACT

One of a series of pre-apprenticeship training modules, this self-paced student training module deals with completing a job interview. Included in the module are the following: cover sheet listing module title, goals, and performance indicators; introduction; study guide/check list with directions for module completion; information sheet discussing the function and importance of the job interview, areas typically covered during the interview, and suggestions for having a successful interview; self-assessment; and post assessment. Focus of the module is on role playing interviews and on observing and giving feedback on other role playing interviews. (Other related preapprenticeship phase 1 training modules are available separately--see note.) (MN)

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INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING SYSTEMS

PRE-APPRENTICESHIP
PHASE 1 TRAINING

FINDING A JOB
INTERVIEWS

CE032903

Goal:

The student will understand the purpose and nature of an interview for a trainee or apprenticeship position. The student will learn how to communicate what an interviewer is looking for and will role play interviews in order to practice these skills.

Performance Indicators:

The student will role play three interviews; twice as an interviewee and once as an interviewer. He or she will also observe and give feedback on at least six other role play interviews.

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Study Guide

Place a check mark in the space provided as you complete each task.

1. ____ Read the Information section.

2. ____ Complete the three interviews and the discussion with two other people in the Self Assessment.

3. ____ Complete the Post Assessment; being interviewed in front of the whole group and giving feedback on at least six other interviews. Go on to the next module.

Information

Most interviewers try hard to be fair, but there is no way in which an interview can be totally objective. The most important thing that is gained by the interviewer is his or her subjective impression of the person being interviewed. This is true even when you have an interview with a committee; the only difference is that a group of people pool personal opinions about you, hoping to come up with a fairer impression.

An interview that leads to your being hired or accepted into an apprenticeship position is concerned with you as an individual; the way you communicate who you are is crucial to your success. If you have been selected for interview by an Apprenticeship committee, it means that you have already scored high enough on objective qualifications such as aptitude tests, relevant classes completed, grades, school diploma or equivalent. The interview will be evaluating your acceptability in terms of the more hazy areas such as ambition, motivation and trainability.

Before attending an interview where someone has the power to hire you or accept you into an apprenticeship program, you will already have written out your background details and these will have been read and assessed by the interviewer. Application forms and sometimes purely fact-finding interviews are intended to screen people out who are not qualified or who do not, in some other ways, meet the basic factual criteria laid down by the employer or committee. That means not only will the results of the interview be largely based on the personal opinions of the interviewer, but those opinions will be made in response to your personal opinions about your own experience.

Let's spell this out a little clearer. Suppose an interviewer asks you, "have you operated this particular machinery before?" The answer will be a fact that could be verified. If, on the other hand, the interviewer asks you, "could you learn to operate this machinery?" he or she is asking for your opinion. Your

opinion could be based on your past experience of being able to operate similar machinery, or on a belief in your mechanical abilities. Whatever the justification for you believing that you could learn, it is still based on opinion.

Even facts can be interpreted in many different ways; try listening to two rival politicians. If an interviewer asks for your G.P.A., there is a factual answer. However, if your grades had picked up considerably in the last two terms at school, you would be totally justified in pointing to this as an indication of change of attitude and proof of your innate abilities and even to suggest the best is yet to come. All of this would be your opinion; but it would be acceptable and would probably seem like evidence of your self-confidence, motivation, determination and ability to progress.

When you are being asked for your opinions, it means more if you can point to relevant examples to back up your claims and, if possible, to quote other people's responses that might confirm what you're saying. If your ability to stick at something may be called into doubt because you had a poor last year in school, then you are justified in drawing on other experiences to show how you can work hard consistently when you're involved in something that challenges you. For example, you might have won every badge there is in scouting or been an excellent swimmer; either of these could be proof of your ability to stick to something until you achieved a long-term goal. This is how your interpretation, or your opinion, about your experience could override facts that the interviewer or committee initially thought very important.

When you are asked "what experience have you had that might help you learn this trade?", it is up to you what you decide is relevant. Of course, some experience such as working on a friend's car or helping someone doing painting and decorating might seem obvious to you and your interviewer as eveidence, but you might also give examples of any occasion where you showed the ability to take instruction to do something practical - e.g. learning to play the guitar or building wilderness survival shelters. Again, the point being made is that your life experience can be relevant in many different ways; this is a matter of interpretation and belief on your part. An opinion is a judgement you make based on belief which could be lacking factual proof. Giving a positive opinion about your abilities will put you in a good light in any interview where healthy self-confidence is an asset. Of course, it is important that you are sincere. Just as truth is the basis for all the facts you offer, being genuine should be the foundation for your own

opinions. Finding examples in your life of being able to learn, get along with others, put in a good day's work, take on responsibility, uphold high standards, etc., will justify a genuine belief that you can express in a positive and convincing way in an interview.

An employer who hires a person to a trainee or entry-level position straight out of school cannot require a lot of on-the-job experience. He or she might expect a certain level of aptitude (scores on the G.A.T.B.), evidence of maintaining educational standards (school grades), proof of having taken certain classes (math, blueprint, shop) and of completing a succession of classes (diploma). Besides these, the employer will be expecting you to:

1. be interested in the work
2. be enthusiastic about entering the trade
3. have habits and attitudes that indicate you will be a good worker
4. be trainable
5. have sufficient maturity to stick at things even when they are difficult
6. be able to work satisfactorily with others
7. be realistic about what you want

A similar list to this has been drawn up by the Joint Apprenticeship Committee as recommended areas for questions in an interview.

a) Is he or she really intersted in the trade (1 & 2)
b) What is his or her attitude toward hard work? Has he or she done any? (3 & 5)
c) Does he or she have a sense of responsibility for performance, materials, safety? (3 & 5)
d) Can he or she take orders? (3, 4, 6)
e) What is his or her attitude toward school? (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
f) Does he or she have realistic expectations? (7)

The figures in parenthesis show how the J.A.C. list covers many of the same points as the first list.

Since there are not many things that can be expected from you, it is very easy to prepare yourself for an interview so that you communicate in a positive manner what is important.

1. How to Communicate Interest and Enthusiasm

Your interest must be genuine. This does not mean that you have to have vast first-hand experience; it does mean that you have taken the trouble to find out about the job or trade for which you are interviewing. Before going to a hiring interview, your career exploration should be complete. Take advantage of all the written materials available, the work site visits suggested and any other sources of information and experience that your instructor can give you. It is not enough to think that you may be interested, you must know it; this is what the interviewer or committee wants to hear.

Similarly, your enthusiasm must be sincere. Never pretend to be enthusiastic in an interview. But also, it is not enough to say you are enthusiastic. To communicate enthusiasm, you have to reveal alertness in your whole body, sparkle in your eyes, liveliness in your voice; it is a feeling that can enliven and almost transform your appearance.

Some people are afraid to express enthusiasm, probably because they think those in authority want sober thinking, even-keeled, dull, passive people to direct. Employers prefer people who are alive enough to be able to work positively under occasional pressure or difficulties, to have enough spark and initiative to be aware of what is good work, what is safe practice, what are productive working relations. A person who says, in a dull monotone, that he or she is very interested in the trade may be sincere and genuine but is not very convincing. The interviewer will have to guess what is going on behind the words. It is very important to show your interest. When people are genuinely and visibly enthusiastic about something, they are guaranteed to capture the other person's attention and interest even if the subject matter is complicated or not in the listener's experience. It is not what people say that is boring but the way they say it. Someone who sounds dull and boring will be labeled dull and boring, and these are not the most desirable people to work with. Place a mirror next to the telephone at home, and the next time you speak to someone you like, watch your facial expression. Is it dull and lifeless? Could someone see when you are interested? Also, try watching the television weather forecast; this used to be a dull subject to be disposed of quickly with a still photo and a quick reader. Now, on many stations, there are TV weather people who tell you about rain tomorrow or fine weather elsewhere, with liveliness, interest and enthusiasm. Watch

and learn from them!

2. How to Communicate That You Have Habits and Attitudes That Show You Will Be a Good Worker

If you have little or no permanent work experience, you will need to find examples from school, part-time and summer employment, volunteer work and jobs done for yourself, family and friends. Each of us has a wealth of experience to draw from.

It is not necessary for you to have done weeks of physical labor to show that you know what hard work is and can do it. You could draw on examples such as: packing and loading when you moved into a house, walking the Pacific Crest Trail, doing regular yard and lawn maintenance, taking charge of small children, repairing bicycles, carrying sacks of groceries to customers' cars, picking vegetables and fruit, collecting and cutting firewood, being a stagehand, etc.

Likewise, your ability to be punctual, attend regularly, be reliable, produce high quality work, take responsibility, get along with others, take orders, etc., can be proved by many different types of experience. Your attendance for several years at church, your membership of a club, your daily appearance at school are typical examples of what you could use if, at school, you were almost always on time and rarely absent, than quote it as evidence that will help you get hired. Taking responsibility could be shown in your having handled a paper route, baby sitting, the choosing of the groceries. It is up to you to show, in your experience, that you have practiced good work habits. The interviewer will respond favorably not only to your examples, but to your positive thinking and self-confidence.

3. How to Show You Are Trainable and Follow Through on What You Start

School is the first and most obvious example; just having graduated from your high school and gained a diploma is sufficient proof. If, however, you had difficulties in school because of lack of interest or personal problems, then you will have to find examples from elsewhere. Sometimes people who have had poor attendance or temporarily dropped out of school, were, at the time, doing something else much more demanding. Some people have traveled continents alone, worked in dangerous jobs in poor conditions, lived off the land and

learned how to use their initiative, apply their intelligence, and persevere over long periods with little initial reward. People who dropped out of high school and took the G.E.D. later show practical proof of their ability to be self-motivated. Remember, if you are seriously applying, through genuine interest, for a job that involves years of training, then it is fairly certain that somewhere in your experience you have all the right work attitudes. The people who have no intention of fitting in to work routines and demands probably never have and would not be applying for an apprenticeship position.

4. How to Show You Can Work Well With Other People

The most immediate proof of this is how you get along with your interviewer. Are you pleasant? Do you have any annoying habits? Can you listen and understand what is being asked? It does sometimes happen that a person being interviewed gets into an argument with the interviewer, cracks a joke in response to a serious question or in other ways proves he or she cannot get on satisfactorily with other people. So, the first requirement is that your manners, your consideration and respect are demonstrated thoughout the interview. Next, you can draw on experience from anywhere that you think is relevant, e.g. being brought up in a large family, being a member of a sports team, taking part in white water rafting, being a helper in any work. Again, it is important for you to prove what you can do, but the range of possible illustrations is enormous. (There is no single correct answer, it is wide open to interpretation, and that is where opinion comes in.)

5. How to Be Realistic About What You Want

It has already been recommended that job site visits will sharpen up your sense of realism. Also, talking with other people who are in the work that you want will give you much practical information. You should also know what sort of a career ladder exists in your trade and how long it takes someone to climb it. It is advisable, however, in an interview for an entry-level position, to stress that you wish to be good at what you're applying for and not to talk about long-term goals except in very general terms. If you are asked what you want to achieve, you could say something like, "I want to be good at whatever I am doing and to be that, I'm prepared to work hard, to learn and practice new skills and to seek new experience." Even though this answer is general, it would be perfectly acceptable. You could follow up by showing that you knew exactly what this involved in the trade that you were hoping to join.

An employer is not going to be sympathetic to someone who talks about a fantasy job. Two people who would not get hired are a would-be apprentice plumber who wants to work in rich people's bathrooms or any aspiring apprentice who expects to work at one aspect of the job until he or she is bored, and then be moved to another.

There are a few other things you could be conscious of in order to interview successfully. These are not usually spelled out clearly by employers or committees beforehand.

1. Your Appearance

*Wear neat and clean clothes. The style of clothes should be similar to those worn on the job or to those worn by the interviewer. Find out what is appropriate long before you go to the interview. It is not necessary to wear suits, but remember that the attention you pay to your clothes says something to the interviewer about your attention to detail and the respect you feel for the importance of the interview. It has been known for people to be rejected because they neglected to clean the backs of their shoes!

*Be well groomed. Even if it is a dirty job, you still need to look well-scrubbed. You can communicate, in words, your readiness to get dirty if it means completing the job. You also would be advised to consider what the length and appearance of your hair might communicate. At the least, it might be considered potentially dangerous even if the interviewer doesn't have other thoughts about either men or women with long, unkempt hair. Be conservative for interviews. If you are different only because of your appearance, then you haven't got a lot going for you in an employer's evaluation.

2. Your Non-Verbal Behavior

*Turn up in plenty of time so that you are as calm and unflustered as possible. If your hands are sweating, sit with the palm upwards and then if you shake hands it will be a firm and dry grip.

*Sit upright and look alert during your interview.

*Leave your gum and cigarettes at home or in your car.

*Keep your hands below your shoulder level; don't touch your face or

make large gestures.

3. Be Positive at All Times

*Be positive about yourself; your skills, your experience, your ability and determination to do well.

*Be positive about other people and organizations. Never "bad mouth" a former employer and don't put down your school. If you had disagreements, take responsibility yourself and avoid putting anyone else down. The more supportive and open you seem to be, the more acceptable you are as an apprentice or trainee.

Self Assessment

In groups of three, role play an interview; one person will ask at least two of the following questions, the second person will answer and the third person will record his or her observations on the check list. Take turns in each role. The person being interviewed should chose a job he or she might be realistically trying to get.

Questions

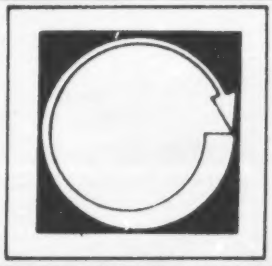
1. What work have you enjoyed most? Why?
2. What work have you enjoyed least? Why?
3. What special skills do you have?
4. What hobbies or interests do you have?
5. Why should we hire you?
6. What are you good at?
7. What are your faults?
8. What kind of job would be interested in doing, as well as the one you are applying for?
9. Why are you interested in this particular job?

Observer's Checklist

Each person should copy this.

The person being interviewed seemed:	I was convinced by what he or she said.	I was unsure.	I was definately not convinced by what he or she said.
1. Interested in the job.			
2. Enthusiastic about starting work.			
3. Likely to be a good worker.			
4. Able to learn new things.			
5. Able to stick at something even when it is difficult.			
6. Able to get along with other people.			
7. Realistic about what he or she wants.			
8. To have a pleasing personality.			
Totals			

Post Assessment



This involves having an interview at least ten minutes long in front of the rest of the group. The instructor (or someone delegated by him or her) should ask the questions. After each interview, the rest of the group should give positive feedback to the person who has just answered the questions. Tell him or her what you thought was well done and what might be improved upon. Each person should decide before the role play interview what they are interviewing for. He or she should then answer all questions as if it were a real life interview. Most of the suggested questions were taken from those written as a guide by the Joint Apprenticeship Committee.

1. How did you become interested in our trade?

2. Would you, in your own words, explain to us your ideas concerning what the duties of a(n) _____ are and what type of work is performed?

3. What experience have you had that might help you learn the _____ trade?

4. What are your favorite hobbies?

5. Do you work on your own car?

6. What satisfaction do you expect out of being a(n) _____?

7. Are you aware that the work in this industry may be seasonal, hard and dirty?

8. What have you accomplished that you are especially proud of or feel good about? Would you tell us about it?

9. Let us imagine that you have our job of interviewing candidates. What would you look for in a person?

10. Do you have anything to add or have any questions that you would like to ask?